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PROGRAM Good Morning America

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SUBJECT Pentagon Nightmare

JACK ANDERSON: There's a nightmare that has Pentagon strategists tossing in their sleep. In this nightmare, Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini dies, and disciplined leftist forces seize power. They immediately invite the Soviet Army to cross the border and help stabilize Iran.

Now, if this sounds like the Afghanistan invasion all over again, that's what troubles the strategists. But Iran is far more strategic than Afghanistan. The Soviets have the brute military power to smash through Iran to the Persian Gulf and menace the flow of Arab oil to the West.

Now, this has been a recurring nightmare. It's been haunting the Pentagon since August 1980, when the Soviets conducted maneuvers on the border. The maneuvers took the form of a mock invasion of Iran. Today the Soviet troops are still on the border, and the Ayatollah reportedly is close to death.

The nightmare has been spelled out in secret documents. Let me read from one of them: "A worst-case scenario would include a full-scale invasion of Iran, starting with operations to seize Azerbaijan and the Strait of Hormuz; and subsequent operations through Iraq, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia to Oman. In this scenario, the Soviet Union could generate a force of over 20 divisions from the Soviet military districts adjacent to Iran."

The likely Soviet invasion routes are shown on this secret map. Now, obviously, the Soviets know where their own divisions are deployed, so there's no reason that you shouldn't see it.

A Soviet strike into Iran not only would endanger the

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Western World's oil supply, but upset the military balance in the Middle East. It would take nuclear weapons to stop a Soviet thrust to the Persian Gulf. In fact, one of the contingency plans calls for a nuclear response to a Soviet attempt to occupy Iran. And that's what makes it a real nightmare.